A REVIEW OF THE STATE OF THE BRITISH NATION.

Thursday, April 1. 1708.

AND ſo the *French* are gone Home again, are they? And all the mighty Project is come to nothing.

Their numerous Fleet with ſeven thouſand Men Went out to Sea, and SO came Home again.

After giving Thanks to Almighty GOD, whoſe Influence governs all the Affairs of the World, and whoſe Government is ſo much rejected by ſome, and deny'd by others, that it is out of Faſhion to ſpeak of it; there may be ſome very uſeful Obſervations made from it, which ſome People perhaps may think odd, but I muſt own I am of another Opinion.

I have always agreed with the general Notion, that ſtanding Armies in Time of Peace, are dangerous to the Liberties of the Country they are maintain'd in, and I allow a great Deal more of the many Lengths haſty People have run into on that Head; but as to thoſe People who were for no Regular Forces at all, and leaving us quite naked to the Inſults of our Enemies, that were ſo: having our *Militia* be our Defence, and neither Generals, Fortifications, nor Regular Troops, they may now come and learn a new Leſſon.

1. That SOME FORCE— is as neceſſary to ſecure a Kingdoms Property, as too much is dangerous to its Liberty.

I know,

I know, I am upon a dangerous Precipice in this Argument, and have a Crowd of pretended Patriots ready to push me head-long down, that I might dash upon the Rocks of Tyranny and absolute Government; and it is much if I do not raise a Mobb upon me, as if I were writing for Stationary Legions in the Hands of the Prince, as a Rod of Iron to rule the Nation by.

But to let these malicious People know, they will be disappointed in their Expectation, I must make a previous Declaration of my true and genuine Design or Meaning in the Word SOME FORCE.

This I have formerly explain'd to be meant by me thus,

1. *Such a Force and no more*, as the People of *England* represented in free Parliament shall agree to be necessary, and consent to be kept up.
2. Such Force and no more, as shall always be entirely subjected to Parliamentary Authority, as to their Disposition and Continuance.

To tell us, such a Force so subjected shall in Time subdue the Parliament, reduce their Masters, and enslave the Kingdom, I think, will admit of these Reasonings by Way of Reply.

1. It cannot be probable, that a Force so small, and so dispers'd for necessary Defence, as this must be, can endanger us; and it has not been instanc'd in any Age in the World.
2. While the Prince submits the Number and Continuance of them to Parliamentary Regulation, in which the following two Things are establish'd—1. *That they are paid by Money given but from Year to Year.* 2 *That it is High-Treason for them to continue longer in Arms than one Year, unless renew'd by Parliament*, it seems impossible.
3. Tho' it had some Possibility of Danger in it, yet if it be prov'd to be necessary, that Risque must be run.

I wave the Weakness of their Arguments, who are for having the *Militia* being thought able to secure us against all the World, and yet will have 10000 Men of standing Troops be able to enslave us—These Things may hereafter come to be debated more largely, but the present Matter arises from hence:

You see, Gentlemen, what a Hurry and a Fright the Invasion of *Scotland* has put us all into, by a most contemptible Body of 5 to 7000 Men——— And, pray, what is it owing to?

I pretend to tell you, it is owing to two Things.

1. The Nakedness of *Scotland* with Respect to its own Defence.
2. The Division and Disaffection of the People.

And to make this more plain, I'll give you a Letter written me from a Person of Honour in that Country, which perhaps may give a brief Sketch of this Matter; the Person, I assure you, is perfectly in the Interest of the Government, and a Lover of Liberty, and in his Letter you may find some true Notions, and perhaps the best of the State of that Country, of any has been yet seen, both with Respect to the Defence of the Nation, and the Case of the Abjuration-Oath, which makes so much Noise among us.

SIR,

Funerheisbing, March 11. 1708.

"I Had wrote to you sooner, but that I had little to tell you, excepting that I went from *Edinburgh* some Days after you went for *England*, and have found it necessary to carry Arms ever since for my Personal Defence; for we have now no Government, and the Murtherer, you know of, rambles, threatens, commits Rapes, &c. as he pleases, and

" and was lately at *Edinburgh*, in the " Face of Authority, without being " moleſted. But I have heard about " ten Days agone of a Deſcent from " *France*, probably deſign'd on *Scot-* " *land*, and ſhould be glad to hear that " *England* was taking ſuitable Meaſures " to put us in Condition, to give the " *French* ſuch Reception as they deſerve; " you know as well as any Man the Cir- " cumſtances of *Scotland*, and I appre- " hend you may readily grant, that " 5000 good Troops might paſs from " one End of *Scotland* to the other with- " out much Oppoſition, as Matters " now ſtand; tho' I think the *French* " infatuate, ſuppoſing they can make " our *Firth*, if they do not land at " *Oramond*, where they may go on " th S ands at low Water in Order of " Battle, and may with little Oppoſi- " tion take *Edinburgh*, where they will " find a Million of Money coin'd, or " in Bullion and Plate. We have " ſcarce 3000 Regular Troops, and no " Militia. The common People be- " yond Tay have no Principle, except- " ing a few, but to obey their Superi- " ors and Landlords, who are generall- " ly *Jacobites*; ſo that no Good can be " expected from them. I ſhould think " it adviſable, that a Militia of 40000 " or 50000 Men of thoſe, who are " known to be well affected to Her " Majeſty, and of Revolution Princi- " ples, were eſtabliſh'd on this Side Tay, " and which, if you in the *South* are " not too diffident to truſt your Friends, " might be done; that ſome Officers " of known Integrity were appointed " to learn them their Exerciſes, which " might be done with their own Arms; " that there were Magazines of good " and regular Arms with Ammunition " to be given them, in caſe there was " an Invaſion, and that they were com- " manded by an *Engliſh* General, who, " if he were of good Morals, would be " more acceptable than a *Scots* Man; for " our People are diſſatisfy'd with our " own Nobility, becauſe of the Union, " tho' the Presbyterians are for keeping " it ſince it is made. I ſee no Inconve- " nience in this Project, if it be not " that your High-Church will cry " out againſt arming the Scots-Presby- " terians, but they are in no Hazard; " for there is not, ſo far as I know, " one ſober Presbyterian in *Scotland*, " who has the leaſt Thought of Re- " forming the Church of *England* by " Force,

" As to the Oath of Abjuration, I " reckon it the Intereſt of the Go- " vernment not to impoſe it on *Scot-* " *land*, even tho' it was amended as to " the Limitation Clauſe; for it will " certainly divide our Church, many " of us ſcruple to ſwear the Oath of " Allegiance to her Majeſty a ſecond " Time, as being unneceſſary; for the " World knows our entire Loyalty, and " we judge it a Grievance, that with " us ſuch as have taken that Oath muſt " take it again in every new Capa- " city. Again, the Presbyterians in " *Scotland* keep their Oaths very Reli- " giouſly. Now the Parliament keeps it " in their own Power to alter the Suc- " ceſſion, but if they ſwear us to it, " we will account our ſelves obliged " to maintain it, tho' they ſhould change " it, if the Reaſons of the Change do " not ſatisfie our Conſciences; ſo that

" by

" by this Law a Foundation may be " laid for a War, wherein the Presbyterians may be oblig'd by Oath to " support the King against the Parliament, as sometime they did the Parliament against the King. But to " conclude, it were a Hardship to abjure any Prince, tho' the Oath were so fram'd, that we had no Objection " against it, while our Country is left " open to his Invasion, and the Government puts us not in a Condition " to defend our selves. Mean Time, " whether there be an Invasion or no, " I must stand to my Arms, so long as " a barbarous Murtherer is allow'd " full Liberty, which is from

Your Friend,

C.

I shall make no Comment upon this Letter; I believe, it will recommend it self to you.

But two Things in particular deserve some Remark. 1. The nasted Condition of *Scotland*. 2. The Connection his Lordship forms between the Obligation of Government on the People to Loyalty, and Obligation on the Government in Behalf of the People for Protection; for how lamentable must the Condition of that People be, whom you will oblige to swear Allegiance to you, when you will not defend them! if their being subdued will not discharge them, you entirely ruin them.

1. Either you run them into wilfull Perjuries.
2. Or resign them to Martyrdom.

And here will be seen, that the Scruples raised among the *Scots-Presbyterians*, against the Abjuration, is not from any Inclination they have to the Popish Pretender, or any Aversion to the present Government—but from such Circumstances in it as seem to shock their Consciences, in that that they may come into such a Condition, as may make it impossible to keep it.

I shall speak a little more to some things in it in our next; but in the mean Time I must hint, I know the arming the *Scots-Presbyterians*, as is here hinted at, is a formidable thing to some of our well-meaning People here——And yet, Gentlemen, it must follow, that you must either maintain Forces to defend them against foreign Insults, and protect them against a Pretender abroad, and a barbarous Party at home, or put Arms into their Hands to defend themselves; and as one of these two are absolutely necessary, take your Choice, Gentlemen, and do which you please your selves.

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